SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
REMARKS EN ROUTE TO QUARRY HEIGHTS, PANAMA
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SECRETARY PERRY: Let me start off with a few introductory comments. About a month after I became the Secretary, I had a meeting with all of the CINC's, all the commanders-in-chiefs of the commands. Among the things we discussed was a commitment that I made to them that I would come to visit each one of the CINC's in the course of the next year to see first hand the issues and the problems of their commands and have a chance to have me as a captive for a day or so where they could explain their problems. I'd get a chance to meet the leadership there, not just the CINC himself, a chance to meet with the troops in the area, and they were very enthusiastic about doing that and that's underway.

So far I've been to the easy one, ACOM, Atlantic Command in Norfolk. I've been to CINCEUR. I've been to PACOM, Pacific Command. Two of those were really not incidental to the kinds of things I've been doing. This is now the first of the deliberately planned trips, just for the purpose of going down and meeting with a Commander-in-Chief of one of the major commands. While I'm there I will focus on two different, generic issues.

The first of those is to review what's going on in that command, to meet the people, to visit the service compound and to observe demonstrations of activities that they have underway just to give me a better feeling that when I'm reading and talking with them and making decisions about that command, I have a better, direct feeling of what's involved there. Then secondly, I want the leadership of the command to describe to me what they see as their future. What big issues, what big problems they have in achieving that, so that I can be better prepared to help them deal with those problems as well as give them guidance on the spot as to whether I think they're heading in the right direction.

Now with SOUTHCOM, a lot of their ongoing operations are involved with the countries in Central and South America, nearly all of which have substantial economic problems, and many of which are in a very important trend of evolving into Democratic nations. We believe that our CINCSOUTH can play an important role in assisting in that transition. The other major activity that's going on in SOUTHCOM is assisting in the drug war in Central and South America. I'll have a chance to discuss the programs they're in, some of the operations they have underway to facilitate that.

Finally, there's a very special problem going on in SOUTHCOM, and that is they are in the gradual process of implementing the Panama Canal Treaty. I want to hear from them in detail what their plans are for the gradual withdrawal. Specifically, get any view from them of what are the future requirements for U.S. forces in the region after full implementation.

While there, I'll pay a courtesy call on the Panamanian government. That's not the purpose of my trip. The purpose of the trip is the SOUTHCOM visit. The fact that SOUTHCOM happens to be located in a foreign country means that I will make a courtesy call. Also on the way back I have a very brief courtesy call with officials of the Honduras government. But, again, both of those are quite incidental to the main purpose of the trip which is to meet the troops and talk to the leadership of the troops and find out what the real issues are of the command.

Also on the way back, as you know, we'll be stopping off at the USS Eisenhower, which is the carrier just getting underway right now, going through its shakedown right now, and we will catch this new and this fearsome warship in the course of preparing for its full operational capability. That should be a very interesting -- and I was pleased that we were able to take all of you aboard on that one because that in itself is sort of worth the price of admission to get out on board the Eisenhower, spend the day there and see how a major warship of that type operates and what some of the issues are.

Of course, there's a special set of issues at the Eisenhower because it's the first carrier in which we have a major number of women assigned to it. We'll have an opportunity to talk to some of the women on board, as well as the men, to see how that integration is going. It's not, by the way, the first carrier on which we've had women on board. I was on the George Washington last week. I talked to one of the women crew on that. But that has been an exception in very few, specific, isolated cases in the past. Whereas the Eisenhower, there will be a total of I think 500 will be on there by the time they get their full complement. With that let me throw it open for questions or comments.

Q. Just to follow-up on the Eisenhower, is it true you're going to launch from the carrier?

A. Yes.

Q. Why? (Laughter) -- What do you want to do? What do you want to see? Feel it?

A. I'd just like to go through the same sort of experiences that the people who work for me go through -- whenever it is feasible and practical. In this case, it's quite feasible and practical.

Q. Have you ever done this before?

A. Yes, I have. In particular, in an S-3, which is what I'll be doing it in, it's a particularly interesting experience. Because the S-3 has a glass front, and the pilot and co-pilot sit side by side, and I'll be sitting on the front seat then, right beside the pilot. On the S-3, on a carrier landing, it's a great thrill. You see that deck. You're sitting there watching the deck come right up to you when you land. It's a thrill. It really is. So that's the other answer to your question.

Q. So you've been on an S-3, you've been on the same aircraft doing this same thing before?

A. Yes, many years ago.

Q. How many years ago?

A. 1979 – 15 years ago.

Q. During the Carter administration.

Q. Could you give us your reaction to the developments with North Korea?

A. One other thing about that carrier landing. You have an opportunity to see carrier operations being trained, in particular, night time operations. Some things you really have to experience to appreciate the complexity and difficulty. Landing on a carrier on this S-3 gives you some appreciation which I said I already have, but it's kind of fun to do it again. Watching a night operation from that what they call the "Vulture's Room" up there, watching that night operation is a thrill, too.

Q. Will you be able to see any of the female pilots or any of the air wing working, actually doing their flight operations -- are they going to be conducting some of them?

A. They will be conducting training operations while we're there. You and I will all have an opportunity to see that. What I'm recommending that you be sure to see, if it's available, which I think it will be, is watching the night operations underway.

Q. You're not flying at night?

A. I'm not flying at night. No.

Q. The biggest news topic of the day is Korea. Can you give us your reaction to the lessening of tensions perhaps, or not? How do you see it? Is this just a stall from the North Koreans?

A. I have to say that I'm hopeful on the developments of the last few days there. The North Korean response, which I've read very carefully, is completely compliant with what we had requested. Totally compliant. And is written in completely unambiguous, clear language. It's very unambiguous that they're committing to not reprocess and not refuel while the talks are going on and that they also commit to having the inspectors and the inspection equipment verifying that they're meeting their commitment. I'm very pleased at that development because I have felt for some time that in many ways, one of the most important steps we could take was to get them to stop, to freeze that program.

Freezing it is not the end of our problems, by any means. But that is a very hopeful step. I am pleased about that. It's also a hopeful step that they have agreed now to a summit meeting with the South Koreans because the problems in the Korean peninsula are not simply U.S. problems. They are U.S. and South Korean problems, in fact, primarily South Korean problems. It's very important to get them back in these discussions. Both of those are very hopeful signs. Nevertheless, we have to be cautious just based on the history of dealing with North Korea over past decades.

Q. Is there any indication in all of this that they are willing to deal with the 1989 part of this? I mean they're freezing things. But is there some other hint that they're willing to let us look at the history in some fashion?

A. They have stated to President Carter that they are willing to address that problem and they believe they can address it to our satisfaction during the third round of talks.

Q. That's not in the most recent communication between our government and theirs since the Carter visit. That issue is basically set aside for the talks.

A. Set aside for the talks. And that it would be resolved, they say, within the context of the third round of talks. To be sure, this third round of talks is going to encompass a broad range of issues of which that would just be one.

Q. Is it possible to address this from a technical standpoint because as I recall, the IAEA is saying that the evidence of whatever they did in '89 may have been destroyed for all time?

A. That's a complicated, technical question to which I don't want to give a complicated, technical answer. Let me see if I can summarize it as well as I can. The actions they've already taken in pulling those rods out the way they did, complicates the issue from determining the history of that reactor, which is what we're trying to determine. But there are several other ways that we can assess the history. Those ways require cooperation from the North Koreans as well. They have implied that they would provide that cooperation. So, it is not by any means a hopeless task to reconstruct the history at this point but it does require cooperation, and therefore, that would be an important issue to us in this third round of talks is to get an agreement on the specific cooperation that's necessary to do that.

Technical experts will differ on whether you can, at this stage, determine the answer with the same level of confidence and the same precision as we could have if we'd done it before. Some believe you can and some are cautious about that. All of them say we could learn quite a bit about the history if we can get cooperation at this point.

Q. Administration officials had expressed some concern in recent months that while things were at a standoff, the North Koreans were continuing to build the additional reactor and

second reprocessing line. Is there any indication from the North Koreans that the current freeze will apply also to those activities?

A. The freeze which they have committed to was very specific. They would not reprocess the spent fuel. They would not refuel the reactor. Those are the only two commitments they made. Indirectly, though, by their expressed interest in going over to a light water reactor, they are proposing, basically, to shift away from the kind of reactors they've been using in the past. Any satisfactory resolution of this problem will certainly imply a shift away from the graphite reactors. If we can reach that agreement early in the negotiations, a logical part of that agreement would be to stop further construction, both on the 200 megawatt reactor and the second reprocessing line -- simply on the proposition that they are unnecessary, unneeded for the program.

The issue here that has to be worked out is the transition period. It's going to take a while, a good many years, to get a light water reactor in place. Even if we come to very quick agreement on it, there's a number of years involved to do this. We have to find some sort of an agreement of how we're going to work with them during the transition and how those reactors are going to function during the transition period between the two.

Q. What happens to all of the elegant and detailed military planning that was done over the course of the last several weeks prior to the Carter visit? All of that just gets put back on the shelf or are any aspects of the reinforcing movement going to carry forward?

A. Two different aspects of our force enhancement planning. First of all, we have an evolutionary force enhancement plan which has been underway for some time now. It is a part of that plan, sort of a five-year plan, so to speak , it involves a force modernization and force enhancement to both U.S. forces and South Korean forces. Let me set that aside for the moment. On top of that, we said if we go to sanctions, that increases the risk of a military confrontation. We ought to have an incremental impulse on top of that. The plan which I presented to President Clinton last week, was that incremental addition to the plan which was specifically in response to the belief that we were going to a sanction. As we suspend pursuing the sanctions, we will also suspend pursuing those options. The two went together. In the meantime, though, the evolutionary force enhancement, force modernization program, will continue just as it would have.

Q. Are you satisfied with that? You had mentioned that you wanted to shorten some of the response time, make sure supplies were in order, that sort of thing.

A. We've done a number of things in that regard already just in the last few months and we'll l continue to take actions in that regard. We are in very frequent communication with General Luck and it's not all on a "how do we deal with sanctions" question, but the thing you would deal with any CINC that's faced with a large army right across his border -- are your forces sufficiently ready and what can we do to improve the readiness? It's a whole host of issues there which we will be working on in an evolutionary way. They include improving ability to deal with mines, improving the ability to...

Q. Sea, ocean-going mines or land mine?

A. Sea. Ocean. Improving the ability to detect tunnels. Improving the ability to deal with close-in artillery. One very specific problem in Korea is the thousands of artillery pieces they have there, very many of them close to the DMZ and dug in. Those special problems we have been working on right along. We'll continue to work and work hard on them.

Q. What would the incremental increase have been if you had gone to the sanctions?

A. I can't answer that. I'll give you a little bit -- what I can about that. There were three options laid out. One of them I would characterize as primarily getting ready for reinforcements rather than adding combat capability. It wasn't a modest action; it involved a lot of people, a lot of activity, and a lot of expense. But it was not adding new squadrons and new brigades and so on. It was adding the various sorts of support personnel and equipment you need so that when you started reinforcing, it went fast and smooth. That was the first option.

The second option, did all those things plus added a big increment of combat capability -- tactical squadrons, ships and army brigades, army battalions. The third alternative added even more of the same. The first was different in nature from the second and third. The second and third were the same in nature, but just more of it.

Q. How close did they come to the 400,000 troops that General Luck wants?

A. These are all pointed to the things you would do that would be most effective on the first day or two or three, before you got all of your other forces over there. They were specifically selected as high leverage items.

Q. Did any of these involve reserve call up?

A. Yes, it would have involved a reserve call up.

Q. Can we talk a minute about something that's more in the region where you're headed here and that is Haiti. To some of us with our creative minds it's hard not to notice historically that Panama was the last Latin American country that the United States went into and took a leader and threw it away and stuff like that. Can you talk to us about the commitment that this Administration has made to get these guys out one way or the other in Haiti? The strength of that commitment, the level of patience you have for this process dragging on?

A. I believe the commitment is strong. I believe the Haitian military leadership should understand that this is a strong commitment. I don't want to comment on patience which gets into tactics of how we would pursue it in timing. But the commitment is strong. I

sort of believe that there's some good probability that the pressure that we're now in the process of putting on, these very targeted, specific sanctions, would in themselves be effective. The conventional wisdom in Washington is the sanctions don't work; they aren't effective. Indeed, the sanctions that we have been applying to this point, were not hurting the leadership. They were depressing the country as a whole, but they weren't hurting the leadership which was insulated to those problems. These sanctions are quite pointed, quite specific, and will hurt the leadership. It will put a lot of pressure on. I believe there's a good probability that through the effective prosecution of this additional increment of sanctions, which we're just undertaking now, we will have an effective result.

Q. Do you believe that in creating the sharpness of the additional sanctions has been complicated by lack of cooperation by certain key financial centers in other countries -- the Swiss, the French, Grand Cayman? These are all countries we're working. Also the air embargo has been complicated by lack of cooperation by the French who are not only not cooperating, are adding a bigger airplane, I understand. How can the sanctions really work if we don't get a unified, international effort?

A. That seems to be the history of sanctions. They effect different country's economies in negative ways indirectly. It's not the country you're trying to hit, but some other country. Many of them resist this either for economic reasons or for principle reasons, whichever. That's been true of almost every time we've tried applying sanctions. However, Haiti is enough dependent on actions that we, the United States, can take, that we will still have effective sanctions. It would have been more effective quicker, with broader international cooperation. But it will still be effective, I believe.

Q. Do you believe that the interest in military action in an invasion lessens from NSC, White House -- are they searching for more interim measures such as this use of this radio democracy, that type of thing? When do you think that will get started, if at all?

A. I think that we're going to continue for some time -- I can't give you a time spell on it -- to push the new sanctions. Radio broadcast into Haiti might be a corollary part of that. I don't want to be coy about it. We are explicitly considering doing that now. We're looking at alternative ways of effecting those kind of radio broadcasts. That we see as a part of the sanctions related pressure rather than as part of a military operation as such. I continue to express confidence in the combination of things we are doing have a good probability of being effective, and therefore, we will not have to get a serious consideration of military options. We have a military option. We prepared it. We know how to do it. We're not anxious to execute it. We will not preclude that as an option.

Q. Is one of the complications of setting up this radio operation that Aristide wants to ride on the plane himself and do live broadcasts?

A. I don't know the answer to that question.

Q. Can you tell us whether or not this prospect of a life of comfort in some foreign country for the three bad guys is how you're going about dangling that in front of them?

A. I also don't know the answer to that question. I wouldn't argue that those talks are or are not going on. I'm not participating certainly. I can't tell you whether or not that is going on at this stage.

Q. Let me ask you about the peacekeeping force then. The numbers seem to keep growing from five or six or seven hundred last autumn when it was initially conceived to now it's over five thousand. Why is it growing and where do you think it's going to end?

A. It's entirely a function of what mission -- what function you're trying to perform with your peacekeeping forces. Last autumn we were considering going in in a permissive environment, invited in by the government to provide some training for the security forces already there. That could be done with a few hundred, I think it was American and Canadian forces who were also going to do a modest amount of construction. Now, if we have to go in and reconstruct a security force, police force, that's a much bigger undertaking and a longer undertaking. The question of how many people need to go into this peacekeeping force, is a very (inaudible)to function, to the environment in which they're going in and the tasks they have to perform. A big variable in the equation is the extent to which they have to temporarily take over the security function and then take on the task of training and developing a new security force. Measured in terms of cities and counties, it's a big country, a lot of people, and it's a big operation to provide security for that whole island. The two different cases of last fall, and an operation in which we are going in to restructure the security force is a very different operation.

Q. But even when you started talking about the newer functions of restructuring, the numbers were several thousand, about 3,000. Now the numbers are growing well beyond that.

A. Even in the case of restructuring security forces, there are two different cases, sub-cases. The first is where you can take the existing security forces and retrain them. The other is where you have to start almost from scratch and recruit a new force and build it almost from scratch. There are cases in between those two. We have looked at all of those alternatives, everywhere from using most of the existing force with reeducation and retraining to where we have nothing at all there and we're starting to build a new force there from the beginning. We expect the situation to be sort of halfway in between those two. But in the various alternatives we're looking at, we have looked at everything in that range and that is the biggest variable to how many are needed in the force.

Q. Is invasion still a real possibility even though the other countries in the region don't want to get involved?

A. Let me get back to the first thing I said, which is we have a strong commitment to replacing that government with a democratic government. If we mean that strong

commitment, then it's my optimistic view that we're going to be able to do this through our present diplomacy and sanctions and pressure. If not right, then that does lead us to consideration of an invasion. I'm not forecasting an invasion. We don't expect we're going to have to have an invasion. We do have contingency plans to execute if we have to.

Thank you,